

Message Text

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY ROME

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: ENRG, IT

SUBJ: CNEN REQUEST FOR 525 KG PLUTONIUM

REF: A. ROME 1976, B. ROME 1011

THE FOLLOWING IS THE TEXT OF A LETTER FROM DR. ALBONETTI, OF
CNEN TO MR. N.F. SIEVERING, ASSISTANT ADMINISTRATOR, UNITED
STATES ENERGY RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT ADMINISTRATION, CONCERNING
AVAILABILITY OF PLUTONIUM FOR THE PEC PROGRAM, AND MR.
SIEVERING'S REPLY OF FEBRUARY 13, 1976:

DEAR MR. SIEVERING,

THANK YOU FOR YOUR TELEX DATED DECEMBER 4TH, 1975 CONCERNING THE
AVAILABILITY OF 525 KG OF PLUTONIUM OXIDE FOR THE PEC
PROGRAM IN ANSWER TO MY LETTER DATED SEPTEMBER 3RD, 1975.

I HAVE TAKEN NOTE WITH DISAPPOINTMENT THAT ERDA IS STILL UNABLE
TO GIVE US A FIRM COMMITMENT REGARDING ITS ABILITY TO SUPPLY

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THIS MATERIAL. I WANT TO INFORM YOU THAT CNEN'S EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

HAS DECIDED TO WAIT UNTIL FEBRUARY 15TH FOR A DEFINITIVE ANSWER. IT IS IMPOSSIBLE FOR CNEN TO WAIT FURTHER FOR A DECISION REGARDING THE SUPPLY OF PLUTONIUM DUE TO THE PLANNING OF THE PEC PROGRAM.

SINCERELY YOURS,

(ACHILLE ALBONETTI)

DEAR DR. ALBONETTI:

THIS IS IN REPLY TO YOUR LETTER OF JANUARY 26, 1976 REGARDING PLUTONIUM REQUIREMENTS FOR THE PEC PROGRAM.

I VERY MUCH REGRET THE DELAY WHICH HAS OCCURRED IN RESPONDING MORE DEFINITELY TO YOUR EXPRESSION OF INTEREST IN ACQUIRING PLUTONIUM FOR THE PEC PROGRAM. THE DELAY IN PART HAS BEEN DUE TO OUR STRENUOUS EFFORTS TO FIND SOME BASIS FOR ACCOMMODATING YOUR REQUEST. WHILE ERDA HAS IN THE PAST PROVIDED PLUTONIUM TO USERS HERE AND ABROAD, IT IS NOT THE PRACTICE OF ERDA TO PRODUCE PLUTONIUM FOR NON-ERDA PROGRAMS. WE HAVE, NONETHELESS, PURSUED A NUMBER OF AVENUES IN THE HOPE OF MEETING YOUR REQUEST. I MUST REPORT TO YOU, HOWEVER, THAT THE OUTLOOK IS NOT PROMISING. PLUTONIUM IS NOT IN EXCESS SUPPLY IN THE U.S., AND WHAT IS AVAILABLE IS PRESENTLY ALLOCATED TO OUR DOMESTIC PROGRAM. WE ARE CURRENTLY REVIEWING THE LONG-TERM AVAILABILITY OF PLUTONIUM FOR RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT BUT THE REVIEW WILL NOT BE COMPLETED UNTIL THE END OF APRIL.

DESPITE OUR INABILITY TO GIVE YOU ANY ASSURANCE AT THIS TIME THAT U.S. PLUTONIUM CAN BE SUPPLIED FOR PEC, WE ARE STILL VERY MUCH INTERESTED IN PURSUING WITH CNEN AND ENEL THE POSSIBILITY OF AN EXCHANGE ARRANGEMENT ON FAST BREEDERS AS DISCUSSED WITH MR. NEMZEK IN THE SPRING OF 1975. WE HOPE TO BE ABLE TO CONTINUE THESE DISCUSSIONS WITH YOU ON THE POSSIBLE SCOPE OF SUCH AN ARRANGEMENT AT THE EARLIEST OPPORTUNITY. I LOOK FORWARD TO RECEIVING FURTHER INDICATIONS OF YOUR INTEREST IN SUCH CO-OPERATION.

NELSON F. SIEVERING, JR
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